



## **Meal Charge Policy for Addison Central School District**

- I. Purpose** - The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for the Addison Central School District to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts, and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

### **General Statement of Policy**

- A. The Addison Central School District recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.
- B. It is the policy of Addison Central School District to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.
- C. Payments to student accounts are made by sending a check or cash to the school.
- D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households by mail prior to the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.
  - 1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.
  - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.
  - 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a lunch each day at no charge.
  - 4) A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée, are not allowed to be charged.

### **Meal Charge Policy**

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, all students will still be provided a meal which meets the meal pattern requirements.
  - All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.
- B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- C. A student eligible for paid meals who has 'cash in hand' at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The 'cash in hand' will not be applied to past due accounts.
- D. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

**Account Status Notifications -**

- A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The Abbey Group or Elementary School Food Program Director will notify each household of account balances by mail and then followed by a phone call by a school representative. Students may also be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.

**Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt -**

When the student balance is negative, the following collection activities will be followed:

- a. For all ACSD Students: An email (or letter if email is unavailable) will be sent home from the school. If action is not taken a phone call will be made by the Food Program Director or School Admin.
- b. The Food Service Manager/Director will contact the building Principal if no payment is received.
- c. The building principal will contact the household to discuss the requirement of the family to provide meals for the student.
- d. The building principal may contact the local social services office if the household refuses to provide meals or pay for student meals.
- e. A certified letter will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid in 60 days.
- f. Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district's policy.

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Superintendent Signature                      Printed Name                      Date  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 SFA Representative Signature                      Printed Name                      Date